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Mitchell Hose Co. horses were prize wagon team

By S. ROBERT POWELL

(This article should be read in conjunction with the article by Barbara Wrobleski entitled "Mitchell Hose Company used horse-drawn fire engine" that was published on page 2 of the NEWS on March 3, 1982.)

On May 18, 1893, the doors of the new home of the Mitchell Hose Company (shown in the accompanying photograph) were thrown open to the public. From a newspaper account of the afternoon's activities at the Mitchell Hose Company that was published in "The Carbondale Leader" (Anniversary Number, May 18, 1893, p. 4), we learn the following information about Dan and Diamond, the celebrated fire horses of the company:

"One of the greatest objects of interest to the visitors was the handsome sorrel team of the company, Dan and Diamond, and they came in for many complimentary remakrs from their admirers. Exhibitions of what the horses can do were given by the boys on several occasions and the performances greatly pleased the spectators.

"So fully cognizant of the workings of the automatic arrangements about the building have the horses become that it has been found necessary to encase in gas pipes many of the ropes which are used to unloose the harness and unfasten doors -- as they had got into the habit of performing these acts along and unaided.

"On Tuesday morning of this week 'Diamond' opened the outer door of the house and proceeded to enjoy his self-attained liberty in the world at large. He was soon corralled in a nieghboring barn and returned to his home."

The stalls of Dan and Diamond were on the ground floor of the building, and their fire carriage, made by the Silsbee Company, was stationed nearby. On the upper floor of the building were the sleeping rooms for four members and a large meeting room.The equipment of the company included, among other things, automatic devices for opening stalls and loosing the horses, drop harness, and sliding pole.

The following account of the opening day's festivities – which included a book reception and performances by the Germania Singing Society and the Mitchell Hose Company Quaretette -- was published in "The Carbondale Leader" (Friday, May 19, 1893, p. 4):

"The new home of the Andrew Mitchell Hose Company was crowded with their friends last evening, on the occasion of their book reception and the members were delighted at the interest which the guests showed in their welfare. During the afternoon and evening the company's team were kept busy in demonstrating to the visitor's the excellent training they had received at the hands of the fire laddies."

"On the second floor the scene was one of much animation and the handsome and substantial manner in which the No. 1 boys had furnished their quarters came as a revelation to many of the visitors, the majority of the laddies being particularly surprised and delighted."

"During the evening a delegation from the Germania Singing Society rendered several choruses and there were songs by the Mitchell quartette and other vocalists. Nearly everybody brought one or more books and the new oak case was soon found too small to contain the deluge of volumes that poured in from every side. Among these were several sets, the most extensive being the complete works of Charles Dickens presented by W.J. and D.P. Byrne."

"Many of the male portion of the visitors took a drop on the sliding pole and then the members have an exhibition of how experienced fireman can be in position to start for the scene of a blaze, and the record heretofore established by the company was lowered three seconds."

"Altogether the evening was a most pleasant one and thoroughly enjoyed by members and visitors alike."

The officers of the Mitchell Hose Company in 1893 were: Peter A. Rivenburg, foreman; Thomas Campbell, assistant foreman; Joseph Kelley, president; Harry Wolcott, vice president; E.W. Reynolds, secretary; Frank Timmons, treasurer; John Coogan, property clerk; John Morrison, assistant property clerk; William H. Dockerty, first pipe man; William White, assistant pipe man. The Trustees were: J.B. Shannon (3 years), Thomas Levison (2 years) and Thomas Campbell (1 year).

The members of the Mitchell Hose Company in 1893 were: Charles Alexander, George Alvord, George Aunger, W.J. Byrne, D.P. Byrne, Frank Brown, Harry S. Bolton, George J. Benton, Will H. Borst, Oliver Bailey, J.A. Brennan, John Bergan, Fred Bayley, Samuel Banker, James Bates, John Burke, Lewis Correll, Joseph Coogan, Thomas Campbell, Charles Cushnie, George Chase, William H. Dockerty, C. Fowler Jr., William Foster, T.F. Herberts, Edward W. Herberts, Joseph Kelley, Emmet Lowry, Thomas Levison, A. Mitchell,Jr., John McArdelle, T.J. McTighe, J.B. McTighe, Robert Maxwell, P.F. McNulty, H.E. May, John Morrison, Will Meyers, T.V. Powderly, Jr., John Pethick, John Phillips, Peter A. Rivenburg, John W. Rivenburg, J. Barry Rowlson, E. W. Reynolds, J. B. Shannon, J. W. Shannon, L.H. Snyder, George Spanle, Samuel Smale, Irving Stone, W.B. Stansbury, Frank J. Shannon, Edward Smith, John Swackhammer, Frank Timmons, D.M. Thomas, Samuel Vail, Frank Walsh, George Ward, William White, Harry Wolcott and Jess Wagner.